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CC 94-129

**From:** <DorisDav@aol.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/4/97 8:24pm  
**Subject:** Slamming

According to USAToday, this is where to send comments on the practice of slamming by phone companies. Our small business has been victimized as has one of our sons in the past year. We strongly believe that a written signature should be required for any company to change our choice of carrier. Saying that we agreed verbally can be (and was) easily abused. I know the call that led to the slamming of our business and made it very clear that we did not want a change, but they changed us anyway. It took us a great amount of time to get every phone line back to where it belonged.

Our son also had to spend unnecessary time getting his home phone back to the correct carrier. Please make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for companies to do this.

Doris Davidoff

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**From:** Mama S Armbrister <scoops-icecream@juno.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.FCC.gov")  
**Date:** 8/4/97 9:12pm  
**Subject:** Slamming - Not tough enough

Slamming is more than someone changing your long distance service without authorization. We have been slammed by charges for a service that was never requested. These charges appeared on our local phone bill \$20.55 for a web-page, from some company in Texas. This company refuses to remove the charge from our phone bill. The government needs to get tough on scams, because they cost everyone in time & money spent cleaning up messes. The name of the company running this web page scam is Enhanced Business Services, Inc. I followed your suggestions & all changes to our phone service now require written authorization.

I have contacted the Better Business Bureau (Nevada & Texas), Consumer Affairs Division, Sprint, FCC. I will also be contacting Congressman Ensign to complain about these practises.

Have a nice day,  
Mama

**CC:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("LAShepard@juno.com")

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**From:** Richard Emond <emond@us.ibm.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/5/97 8:34am  
**Subject:** slamming

I was recently slammed by AT&T. I discovered this when I tried to use my MCI calling card to call my mom and it wouldn't work. MCI told me that someone had changed my long distance provider to AT&T. Their marketing tactics are horrid and they constantly call and bother us at home, sometimes 4-5 calls per week. I had this situation fixed and had a 'pick-freeze' put on my account.

What is troubling is this I hear about where a phone company can send me something that will change my carrier if I don't do something. That is ABSURD and it MUST be stopped. That is not only an unethical marketing practice, it should be ILLEGAL. I throw away junk mail and I'm not about to read every piece of junk mail that comes in just to make sure that I have to react to it to prevent something from happening. That puts me in REACTIVE, not PROACTIVE mode and should be declared illegal. No organization should be able to take an action that would affect me without my explicit agreement.

Peace,

Rich

\*\*\*\*\*

Senior Project Manager  
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\*\*\*\*\*

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**From:** <AGatDJEChi@aol.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/5/97 9:59am  
**Subject:** slamming!

I am Manager & Pres. of Don Johns Engineering in Chicago. Parent company is Don Johns Inc with main office in Chicago. Branches in KY & GA. I take care of all phone service for all groups/offices [5].

We have composit contract with AT&T for all offices/groups long distance services.

We have pick restriction at each local phone service so that we are not slammed.

This last month our Louisville KY office WAS slammed. The local phone company is crediting us for the "Excess" charges and changing our lines back to AT&T. It is a real nuesance when this happens. Back a year and half ago had FAX line slammed.

Constantly get one or two phone calls a week from third party "suppliers" of phone service. Biggest problem is they represent them selves as The-Local-Phone-Company or AT&T. If you ate not aware of this and do not know how to ask the "Right" questions you can in advertantly say something and get slammed.

I am for not paying bill if slammed as well as possible criminal prosecution. This is out right theft in my mind. These people know exactly what they are doing when they do it.

You do need to do something different with regulation and/or legislation to keep the "BAD" guys out even if it means limiting the company that can provide service [lease from others].

Sincerely Yours:  
Allan Gdalan  
DON JOHNS INC & DON JOHNS ENGINEERING  
1312 W> LAKE STREET  
CHICAGO, IL 60607  
PH(312)666-3535; FAX(312)666-0777

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**From:** Patrick Barry <Patrick\_Barry@compuserve.com>  
**To:** FCC <slamming@comments.fcc.gov>  
**Date:** 8/5/97 10:22am  
**Subject:** Amerinet slam

Please be aware that a company called Amerinet, 5140 W. Hurley Pond Rd., Farmingdale, N.J. 07727, appears to be slamming telephone customers. I received a piece of first class mail yesterday congratulating me on entering their monthly drawing . . . "Your signature has authorized us to change your long distance service . . ." The premium for entering the contest was a free Solo America pager made by Motorola.

I had not signed anything, and when I called their phone number 888-256-8381, I was only able to reach voice mail systems. The first option was to cancel service!

This is the second time I was slammed. The first was by Pantel, and when I called them it took some time to find someone who could explain how my "authorization" took place. They sent me the card and my name had been written in, an obvious forgery.

I think serious fines or even criminal penalties should be put in place for this type of business practice. It isn't even a business practice at all. It's outright theft of service.

Patrick Barry  
6743 N. Newgard Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60626-4211  
773-973-2169

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**From:** "Marilyn J. Childress" <duvalgainc@mindspring.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/5/97 10:16am  
**Subject:** Phone bills

I want to register my complaint about the unfair practice of slamming. My company recently has had to deal with this. The company that slammed us just out and out lied to our phone company saying that they had our permission. When I asked for the person's name they gave me a name of someone who did not even work here. They still would not switch us back with out doing research which they said would take three -four weeks. But they said they called us on a certain date and that same date they had us switched. Does not seem right.

I favor having written authorization to switch phone companies. I do not think that would curb competition. People must sign to switch credit cards, etc. There can be control mechanisms to stop slamming. I think a company that does switch you service should be responsible for the phone calls and the damages to a company. I had to spend three days working on getting our account switched back.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our thoughts.

Marilyn Childress  
Duval of Georgia, Inc.  
770-449-4745, E-mail= duvalgainc@mindspring.com  
Marilyn J. Childress, Operations Manager  
Duval of Georgia, Inc.  
4527 S. Old Peachtree Rd.  
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E-Mail: <http://www.duvalgainc@mindspring.com>

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From: Carl George Nyberg <cnyber1@uic.edu>  
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
Date: 8/5/97 10:16am  
Subject: I support Sen. Durbin's fines

Adam Sokol works for the State of Illinois Attorney General in the Consumer Fraud Division. He's a close friend and I've attended his consumer awareness presentation, which includes much information about phone slamming. I have reported a number of cases of phone slamming to Adam and feel I understand the issue very well.

I work at 202 S. State St. in Chicago. Everyday I see AT+T reps switching phone service. Some of it is deceptive, but legal. Much of it is illegal. I want you to know how AT+T works the system when you consider how to deal with phone slamming.

AT+T has about a dozen reps working various parts of State St. in the Loop. The reps are virtually all black. They offer to give a gift (thermal cup or some other low value trinket). Some are pretty clear about the form changing long distance service. Some reps claim it won't change the service. Those reps claim the person will be called and asked if they want their service changed. Other reps are somewhat in between. They don't advertise that filling-out the form will change service, but they don't deny it if the person asks.

One of the things that disturbs me about this campaign is that it is targetted at blacks. The AT+T reps almost exclusively go after black pedestrians and ignore white pedestrians. When a couple male AG lawyers went to investigate, there was no slamming. But when the AG rep was female, the AT+T person tried to slam her.

Previously I considered AT+T a reputable company. The FCC should come down hard on phone slamming. Stiff fines will discourage the practice. I'm not especially anxious to see the AT+T reps on State St. go to jail, but I would like to see their supervisors held accountable in a meaningful way.

Carl Nyberg  
POB 3996  
Oak Park, IL 60303  
(312)922-4187  
(312)939-3316  
home: (708)383-9275

Thanks to the Chicago Sun-Times for publishing the FCC comments address in a prominent place.

CC: FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("letters@suntimes.com")

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**From:** <juhant@tellabs.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/5/97 11:12am  
**Subject:** slamming

Dear Sirs:

I am responding to an article in today's Chicago Sun-Times regarding slamming.

In it you asked for comments regarding slamming and possible penalties.

I was slammed in my last phone bill by AMER-I-NET of Kalamazoo, Michigan. When I finally got their phone number and called them about who authorized the switch to their long distance service and ask for a refund of the \$5 switching fee, I received a pre-recorded message asking for my number with a promise that my call would be returned. My call was not returned, and I am still wondering who will re-imburse me for the switch I did not authorize.

I feel violated that some company has invaded my privacy in this manner and charged me for the switching. It is not right. It is MY phone account and MY money they are taking control of. My relationship with my telephone company should be one of trust, not that of opportunity for any company that comes along.

Companies engaging in slamming should make restitution to customers affected, pay fines and face possible jail time. I hope something effective can be done to curtail this activity.

Sincerely,  
Ernest N. Juhant

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**From:** Anne Tanner <anne-tanner@uiowa.edu>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/5/97 11:24am  
**Subject:** Long-distance telephone service

I am so happy that you are going to bat for the public in this matter, to try to keep telephone companies from switching customers without their permission. I have taken to hanging up without saying a word, because I was switched once when the only word I said was "No." I've been bothered constantly at home, insulted by obnoxious telemarketers, and hurt financially when the switching occurred. However, that was quite a long time ago, so it's probably not relevant to your process now.

I am baffled by the Consumer Federation quote in my local newspaper (Iowa City Press Citizen, Monday, Aug. 4, p. 10A) about trying to avoid "onerous requirements that could kill competition." Is a ban on fraud an onerous requirement? Some of these companies are attempting to cheat us. Surely that is the province of intelligent government.

Anne Tanner

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From: "David Hopkins" <dhopkins@email.econ.ag.gov>  
To: FCCMAIL.SMTPLM("Slamming@Comments.FCC.GOV")  
Date: 8/5/97 9:34am  
Subject: My Problem is Similar to Slamming

Dear FCC,

I say your e-mail address and 1-888 phone number in \_USA Today\_, Aug. 4th.

Please hear my complaint. I have a complaint that is similar to being "slammed" by these long distance phone companies, but it is not really "slamming" technically.

I spent about 3 month researching the best long distance phone company and the plans that would fit our family. I chose the company that I wanted and called them to get their best rates. They set me up with the plan that I wanted and even waved the change-over fee. This company even sent my a follow-up letter describing the plan that I had signed up for. I signed up for this plan for the long haul. It was not an introductory plan nor was it a plan with a defined ending date. So far, so good.

After the first month, this company switched me to a more expensive plan. I did not call them, I did not ask for the more expensive plan. The company did this on their own. I called and complained. They switched me back. I was on the correct plan for half a month and then SWITCHED AGAIN to a more expensive plan. I called again to complain. I told them I was going to contact the FCC if they ever did this again. After that threat I have not been switched again.

If more people are having similar problems as me then I think this problem should be investigated and dealt with along with the slamming. It is roughly the same as slamming expect you are robbing your own customers instead of stealing other companies customers.

You will be surprised who this long distance company is! It is: ATT

--David Hopkins

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| David E Hopkins email: DEHop@Erols.COM  
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|  
| 540-898-3748  
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**From:** "Richard Horowitz" <REANDDE1@msn.com>  
**To:** FCCMAIL.SMTPNLM("slamming@comments.fcc.gov")  
**Date:** 8/4/97 8:47pm  
**Subject:** stop slamming now

It has been reported that a carrier can change your service just by sending a form in the mail which you must reply to in 14 days. If you don't respond they can legally switch your carrier. The FCC sanctioned this? Stop this fraud immediately by eliminating no response mail practices and find the government employees responsible for allowing this sham, and fire them. Also require signatures of the bill payer or a verified e-mail request to institute a carrier switch. Failure of either should result in a \$10,000 fine per incident and revocation of license after a specified number of occurrences. At the very least hold the carriers responsible for the bills incurred by customers who didn't provide signatures. This gives the carriers incentive to collect signatures and not switch people until the signatures are obtained.

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